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INFO RUEHPS/AMEMBASSY PRISTINA IMMEDIATE
RUEHTI/AMEMBASSY TIRANA IMMEDIATE 0077
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 0384
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 0190
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 0138
RUEHIC/OIC COLLECTIVE
RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 8336
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 4523
RUEHDH/AMCONSUL DHAHRAN 0034
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 2724
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JEDDAH 000165

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (UPDATED RI FOR OIC COLLECTIVE)

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SUBJECT: ALBANIANS REPORT SUCCESS IN MOVING DRAFT
RESOLUTION ON KOSOVO THROUGH OIC PREPARATORY MEETING

REF: JEDDAH 0163

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Classified By: Consul General Martin R. Quinn for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)
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11. (C) SUMMARY: At a May 4-6 OIC preparatory meeting in advance of the upcoming Damascus ministerial conference, the OIC has passed an Albanian-submitted resolution encouraging its 57 member states to consider diplomatic and economic ties with Kosovo. According to the Albanian ambassador, Egypt worked hard to derail the process after general debate had finished and copies of the resolution were distributed, possibly demonstrating pique with the US over Israeli action in Gaza. While some changes to the language of the draft are still possible, momentum behind the Kosovo resolution appears strong and likely to remain intact through the preparatory meeting and move straight to the OIC in Damascus conference, May 23-25. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) RESOLUTION ON KOSOVO APPEARS TO HAVE PASSED WITH ONLY MINOR CHANGES Albanian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Admirim Banaj, was pleased to report in May 6 telcon that the resolution submitted by Albania supporting OIC members to consider establishing diplomatic and economic ties with Kosovo appears to have passed. The resolution was pushed through the OIC May 4-6 preparatory in Jeddah in advance of the May 23-25 ministerial in Damascus. Ambassador Banaj cautioned that there still is a chance for additional changes to the resolution (see para 3 and 4 below on Egypt), but the resolution has moved forward. Banaj noted the one substantive change: the 2nd part of para 4 (which reads "Notes that OIC member states will decide in accordance with their own national practice and international law on their relations on Kosovo") was dropped. The Albanian options for the communique were not discussed, and Banaj thinks there may not be a communique emerging from Damascus (reftel).

13. (C) EGYPT THE OBSTACLE: According to Banaj, "the one obstacle is Egypt." After copies of the approved resolution

were returned from the Secretariat after being translated and copied, and only at this point, Egypt raised concerns, which Banaj describes as mere "excuses." He continued: "Egypt tried to sabotage everything that had been done." The Egyptian delegation asked for time to go back to Cairo to seek additional guidance. Banaj pointed to one OIC official as orchestrating the affair: "I think in one way or another it is the brain of this Fathallah," referring to OIC Director of Political Affairs, Egyptian diplomat Mahdi Fathallah.

¶4. (C) "REVENGE" FOR GAZA: While not perfectly clear on Egypt's motivations in trying to block the Kosovo resolution, Banaj personally suspects that Egypt's action may be "revenge" for the recent hostilities in Gaza, implying that Egypt holds the US accountable for the Gaza situation and is opposing the Kosovo resolution in defiance of US recognition efforts. Banaj feels that the Egyptian delegate's behavior is typical of an Egyptian government working to obscure the real issues. The Albanian expressed his personal frustration: "I was very angry with the Egyptians. I wanted to tell them that they cannot play games with an issue like this."

¶5. (C) ALGERIA, AZERBAIJAN FALL IN LINE: Algeria, expected by the Albanians to pose a significant obstacle to the passage of the Kosovo resolution, in the end turned out not to put up a major fight. Algeria apparently requested minor alterations, but nothing changing the overall tone of the draft. For their part, the Azerbaijanis initially asked for time to go back to Baku, but quickly received an OK from their home government.

¶6. (C) BROAD SUPPORT, ROLE OF SYRIAN CHAIR CRITICAL: Banaj singled out the role of the Syrian chairman for pushing the resolution forward. The Syrian declared that the resolution had passed in principle, that comments or changes could be

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considered, but that the resolution itself is moving forward. He reported wide support among OIC member states: "We found the atmosphere very positive. It was very smooth the way it was conducted."

¶7. (C) DAMASCUS MEETING NOT LIKELY TO CHANGE OUTCOME: The annual OIC ministerial in Damascus is not likely to change the outcome of the decision made at the preparatory meeting according to Banaj, who noted that no votes are likely -- nor any vetoes -- with the resolutions expected to pass by consensus and concerned states abstaining. Banaj held open the possibility that the Egyptians might still "raise the issue of postponement," but probably will not be able to marshal any great impact.

¶8. (C) COMMENT: The ease with which the OIC has been able to pass a resolution supporting Kosovo among member states, many of whom still have not recognized the country, may be a sign of the significant role that Saudi Arabia's recognition of Kosovo has played in influencing others. Egypt's combative stance against the Kosovo resolution is apparently not drawing in much support, even among Arab nations. It may be encouraging that Syria, a country clearly sharing Egypt's concerns over Gaza, has not allowed this factor to influence its view towards Kosovo. The Albanian ambassador's suggestion that the Egyptians are not being clear about the real reason for their opposition may make more sense than his own belief that this is somehow tied to U.S. support for the Israeli incursion in Gaza. Banaj did not report any effort by the Iranian delegation to derail the resolution. END COMMENT.

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